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Problem For America

The economic plight of one American in every ten—the Negro—is a problem which has been somewhat obscured during the war period. The demands of war have not permitted the nation to neglect entirely one-tenth of its manpower; in addition, many of us have felt the inconsistency of continuing racial discrimination at home while fighting its proponents abroad.

But both these motives will fade as peace approaches. The obstacles which still face the Negro, even in wartime, will multiply. This is a situation the National Urban League and its local affiliate, the Morristown Service Council, are trying to meet.

The League, which has the backing of distinguished Southerners, as well as Northerners, asks only for the Negro "an opportunity to share in our national life in keeping with his training and ability" and "that he have a chance to train himself so that his real capacity may be developed."

"This ideal," the League continues, "obviously has not as yet been realized. The Negro has not been allowed to contribute in all phases of the defense effort, either in the armed services or in private positions ,in proportion to his numbers and his abilites. There have been, and are, many obstacles in the form of ingrained habits, attitudes and prejudices to keep him out. These obstacles will not vanish overnight."

A further fear is that with the ending of the hostilities—when factories return to peace time pursuits—the Negro, the last to be hired, will be the first to be let go. Unless positive steps are taken now to cope with this problem, strife of unprecented proportions will ensue.

The Morristown Service Council of the National Urban League, primarily through its Employment Committee, is endeavoring to cope with this problem, by surveying industry to determine the possble opportunities in the postwar period for the Negro, and at the same time trying to find skilled Negroes and to afford training opportunities for the unskilled. The Council deserves the cooperation of all of us, for this problem affects all of us. Skilled Negro workers are urged to communicate with William T. Ruffin, Coordinator of the work of the Morristown Service Council of the National Urban League.

Economic Base Of Negro Question

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Brooklyn, N. Y.
Editor, Daily Worker:

The article of Sept 11 entitled, "White Americans Only" by Abner Berry brings to mind the following in regard to the "Negro Question" which I have long held.

It is, of course, known that the "Negro question" is a special problem arising out of the class struggle in America between the capitalists and the workers. Its purely economic origin, though, has long been conveniently forgotten by those interested in spreading and further implementing this splitting device.

As a guide for white and Negro progressives to struggle more effectively, I suggest that more stress be laid on this deliberate attempt of the financial powers to completely hide this economic base, and to subtly indicate that the source of prejudice is no more or less than, man's innate prejudices.

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This prejudice against Negroes, found almost ready-made after the end of slavery, served as a very good wedge to keep the rising class of industrial workers from uniting effectively. And beginning with the success of the wedge of Negro prejudice, they went further, and introduced others, anti-Semitism, anti-Communism, etc.

A conscious program of trade union education should start with the most emphatic assertion that in unity there is strength, and that all differences, hatreds, etc., that exist between one worker and another, are deliberately fostered by capital (sometimes so subtly that it would take entire courses in American history, the trade union movement, and political repercussions since the War of Independence, in order to bring them to light.) For, once a trade unionist understands that these prejudices, though they have gotten so deep into the living patterns of many white and Negro Americans that they accept them like they do night and day, serve only to divide the working class, he never uses them as a matter of union policy.

C. E.